CHURCH ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

CONVENTION

WHICH MET AT

WORCESTER, MASS., MARCH 1, 1859.

NEW YORK:
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1859.

PROCEEDINGS.

A Convention of Christian brethren, on the subject of slavery, was assembled at the Mission Chapel in Worcester, Mass., at 10 A. M., March 1st, 1859.

Hon. Elmer Brigham, of Westboro, Mass., was chosen Chairman.

Rev. J. C. Webster, of Hopkinton, Mass., was chosen Clerk.

Prayer was offered by Rev. Henry T. Cheever, of Jewett City, Ct., and all Christian brethren present were invited to sit and deliberate on the subject of the conference.

It was then resolved, that it is a duty incumbent upon Christians to organize a Christian Anti-Slavery Society. While the names of brethren present were being enrolled, it was moved by Rev. Henry T. Cheever, "That a committee of three be nominated by the chair, to submit a plan of organization to this Convention, after such Committee shall have been instructed by a free expression of opinion on the part of the Convention."

The mover stated that on the 20th of December last, at a meeting of ministers in Worcester, two of the brethren were appointed a Committee of Correspondence, to confer with such Christians as they had reason to believe would be favorable to an aggressive movement against slavery, by the Church, and to procure their assembling in conventions, at such time and place as might be convenient, in order to take into consideration the expediency of forming a Church Anti-Slavery Society. In fulfilment of that duty, the committee had written and conferred with divers brethren, from some of whom not present, he would now read communications, that would express the views with which he supposed most of the brethren had come together.

Convention then gave attention to the following letters:

From Rev. David Thurston, D. D.

LITCHFIELD CORNER, Maine, Feb. 25, 1859.

REV. J. C. WEBSTER:

My Dear Sir:—Yours of 31st ult. I received by way of Readfield, on the 6th inst. I have ever since felt a very strong desire to attend the proposed convention

at Worcester, next Tuesday. But duty seems to call me here. I have thought on the object of the Convention. What is necessary to be done? What can the ministers and Churches do? What ought they to do? These inquiries will doubtless be considered.

It is not difficult to say what is needed: *a deep and permanent conviction of the great sinfulness of slaveholding.* Were such an intelligent conviction in the minds of all the ministers and members of the churches, they would be prepared to act effectively. This they never will do, until this conviction is produced. The ministers and members who have this conviction, must talk, preach, labor, and pray to produce it in others. This they can do. Many preachers and private members, are extremely reluctant to look at the subject. They say, "We have nothing to do with it." Yet the subject has much to to with us, *all* of us. There is not, probably, a church in this country which has not and does not feel the corrupting influence of the vile system of slavery. Is not the first thing necessary to be done to get the ministry and membership *right* on the subject? Those who are right must then "cry aloud and spare not; lift up their voice like a trumpet; and show the people of God their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." No pains should be spared. Let it be made to appear that a piety, that ignores humanity, is not the religion of Christ, any more than a humanity that ignores piety. The Christianity of the Bible includes both. Either omitted or not made prominent in any system of religion, renders it essentially defective. James, 2d chapter.

Ought not ministers and Christians, who understand this subject, to spread it out, to make it plain, to converse on it, to preach on it, to publish on it, to pray over it, until the Church, at least a strong majority, are *right* on the subject? If those who see and deplore the disastrous influence which slavery exerts on the Church and the country, yes, not on this country merely, but on the world, do not exert themselves to bring the Church to a right course, who will do it? When will it be done?

We are acting in relation to this subject, not for the good of the Church here, or our country, but for the world. Could the Church be made to understand what an amount of influence we are exerting on other nations, especially the nations of Europe, in regard to the principles of freedom, they would feel that our responsibilities were fearfully great. Their efforts to have the dire curse of slavery removed would be energetic, persevering. The slaveholders and their abettors would have no rest.

My prayers shall be that the Convention may be richly endowed with the wisdom from above.

Fraternally and cordially yours, for truth and right,

DAVID THURSTON, (80 years the 6th inst.)

From Rev. J. W. Murdock, D D., Pastor of Baptist Church, Boston.

BOSTON, Feb. 26, 1859.

REV. HENRY T. CHEEVER, Jewett City:

My Dear Sir:—A public engagement in another direction will prevent my meeting the friends of freedom and a pure Christianity in council, at Worcester, on Tuesday next.

I cherish, and have not failed to express, on all fitting occasions, the deepest re-

pugnance to the system of chattel slavery, regarding it as the standing reproach of the democracy and Christianity of our land. I hold it not only as a violation of the rights of man, but as a sin against God; and am ready to unite with the friends of Christ in denouncing it as opposed to the law of love, and the spirit of Him in whose name we are called. And conceiving that the practice or defence of it is utterly incompatible with enlightened Christian character, I cannot fellowship it in any form, or by any act.

I will express the hope, that the convention about to assemble in Worcester, will be able to agree on a platform which will unite the hearts and convictions of all Christians, who mean to be governed by religious principle instead of worldly expediency. At the same time, if I might offer a simple word of counsel, I would ask my brethren to exercise all reasonable forbearance towards that large body of honest, though cautious men, who are with us in sentiment, but who would be startled by any seeming harshness of denunciation. While we abate not one jot from the inflexibleness of truth and justice, let us be careful to breathe the meek spirit of the Gospel, "speaking the truth *in love*."

Praying that the presence of God may be with you, I am, my dear sir,

Yours, for the truth,

J. W. MURDOCK.

From Rev. C. W. Wallace, Manchester, N. H.

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire, Feb. 28, 1859.

My Dear Brother:—I received your note which you addressed to me some days ago. It had been my purpose to go to Worcester to-morrow, but to-day I have had a call which seems to make it necessary for me to remain at home.

I regret my inability to meet with some of the true and whole-hearted friends of freedom. Let me say, however, my whole heart is with you in any measure adapted to bring the Church of Christ in this country to a right position in regard to the sin of slavery. I feel that here is the great difficulty. The Tract Society at New York, and the New York Observer, represent in this respect, but too nearly, a large part of the Church.

May God give you wisdom, and may all who may meet with you at Worcester, be led in the path of duty.

Will you be so kind, if you receive this note in season, to remember me to the brethren who meet with you. And please inform me of the results of your meeting.

Yours, in the love of Christ,

C. W. WALLACE.

REV. J. C. WEBSTER.

From Rev. J. A. Hazen, Lisbon, Connecticut.

LISBON, Connecticut, Feb. 17, 1859.

Dear Brother Cheever:—I have received and read your letter with much interest, and shall make an effort to attend the proposed convention, as I think a delegate from this Church will also do. It appears evident to me, that neither the enormity of the iniquity of slavery, nor the greatness of the threatening danger to the Church,

and to the country, is felt by the body of the ministry or Churches. So far as I can see, there were less evident warnings of some of the past great strides of slavery, ending with the Dred Scott decision, than there is now of the reopening and authorization of the slave-trade. And none can tell what next.

I have no definite idea of the steps contemplated being taken at the convention; should be glad if you would send me one or two of the leading articles of the proposed constitution, and enough of the resolutions to give me an idea of their drift.

You may not, perhaps, be aware, that this Church has for years been standing on what has been regarded as extreme Anti-Slavery ground. So long ago as 1843, it adopted and published a strong expression of its views respecting Slavery, and passed the following resolution as its rule:

"Resolved, that we feel constrained, in a spirit of meekness, to reprove and rebuke all professing Christians, ministers, and Churches, *who tolerate slavery in word or deed*, and that we cannot extend the fellowship of the Gospel to those who continue to enslave their fellow-men after the faithful admonition of their Christian brethren."

And, once at least, since that time, they have had occasion to apply the rule, in debarring from the pulpit and from the communion-table, a slaveholding minister, a friend of the acting pastor.

If all the non-slaveholding Churches had then taken like ground, would not the result be nearer what Albert Barnes dimly saw, when he closed his volume with the memorable words: "THERE IS NO POWER OUT OF THE CHURCH THAT COULD SUSTAIN SLAVERY AN HOUR, IF IT WERE NOT SUSTAINED IN IT." "Let every religious denomination *detach itself from all connection with slavery;* and utter a calm and deliberate voice to the world, AND THE WORK WILL BE DONE."

If I should be prevented from attending with you, you will certainly have my hearty sympathy and concurrence in any judicious action. I have written to my brother, and sent him a copy of your letter. He will, I am confident, warmly approve of the movement.

I am, most sincerely yours,

J. A. HAZEN.

From Rev. Edwin B. Foster, Lowell, Massachusetts.

LOWELL, Feb. 19, 1859.

Dear Brother Webster:—Your favor of January 31, was duly received. My warm sympathies are with you in the attempt to lead on to an "advanced position" on the subject of Slavery. The Church must take this position, in my judgment, or nothing will check the encroachments of that power which is determined to subdue to its uses, all civil authorities, and all ecclesiastical influences in the country.

Some doubt this ambitious purpose on the part of Slavery, but the history of Southern Disunionism, both in Church and State; the whole course of national legislation, and of judicial decision on the Kansas question; the entire voice of Southern divines, and Southern Statesmen, and the Southern press, make the matter very clear to my own mind.

I fear that new territories are to be annexed, and to be settled with the "peculiar institution" as a yoke upon them, and a dishonor to the Republic forever. I fear that the foreign slave-trade is to be reëstablished and added to the domestic,

for the perpetuity of Slavery. I fear that the Northern States are yet to taste the bitter fruits of this system of bondage, in more terrible form than ever before, in the suppression of free discussion; in the dishonor of free labor; in the prostitution of the public mind to the support of a great injury to the nation, and a great sin against God.

If the Church awake not—if their position be not unequivocal and firm—if their movement be not outward, I see not any hope of safety for any great religious interest of the land. If my health is sufficient I shall be happy to attend the proposed meeting next week. It is not probable, however, that I can go.

Fraternally, and very truly yours,

E. B. FOSTER.

From Deacon Simon Page, Hallowell, Maine.

HALLOWELL, February 25, 1859.

BROTHER CHEEVER,

Dear Sir:—Your favor of the 22d is received. It would afford me much pleasure to be present at the meeting you propose, to be held at Worcester next Tuesday, but the short notice renders it impossible for me to make such arrangements as would allow me to be absent from home at that time. I most heartily approve of the object of your convention, and the formation of a Church Anti-Slavery Society. I think the time has fully come when the Church should arise and proclaim to this nation and the whole world, that Slavery is that accursed thing with which she cannot and will not hold fellowship. It is humiliating, indeed, that so many of our church-members, those who profess to have their lives regulated by the principles of the Gospel, do wink at, and even give countenance to the heaven-daring sin of Slavery. I do not understand how it is, that any one who has had the operations of God's Spirit on the heart, so as to change it into a new heart, can be left in such darkness, as not, at the very first glance, to see that Slavery is wholly opposed to the precepts of the Bible. It does seem strange that the Spirit should leave so much of its work undone, and is there not reason to fear that in such cases the work has not been commenced by the Spirit? I hope you will have a good meeting, one which will be the commencement of a new era in the Anti-Slavery cause, and which, with God's blessing, will work a change in the Church.

Our pastor, Rev. Mr. Butterfield, would favor the objects of the Convention, but cannot be there.

Yours truly,

SIMON PAGE.

From the Rev. George Shepard, D. D.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Bangor, Feb. 14, 1859.

My Dear Brother Cheever:—I fear it will not be in my power to go to Worcester at the time designated for the Convention. I trust the Spirit of the Lord will be with you, and that you will be led to the adoption of some plan which shall hasten the deliverance of the Church and the nation from the great *taint* and *curse* of Slavery.

Yours, most truly,

G. SHEPARD.

The foregoing letters having been read, Rev. Messrs. Cheever, of Jewett City, Ct., and Hunt, of Franklin, Mass., and Brother J. A. Fitch, Esq., of Hopkinton, Mass., were appointed a committee to report a plan of organization.

While the Committee were withdrawn, Rev. William Goodell, of New York, addressed the Convention; and the roll of members was made up as follows:

MEMBERS.

Rev. Samuel Hunt, Franklin, Mass.
" W. H. Beecher, North Brookfield, Mass.
" C. Cushing, " " "
Dea. Wm. P. Haskell, " " "
" H. L. Johnson, Jewett City, Conn.
Rev. L. H. Shildon, Westboro, Mass.
Hon. Elmer Brigham, " "
Rev. Henry Allen, Saxonville, "
Abijah Wood, Esq., Westboro, "
J. A. Fitch, Esq., Hopkinton, "
Samuel R. Heywood, Esq., Worcester, Mass.
E. H. Heywood, Esq., " "
Rev. S. Kelley, Laurell-street Methodist Church, Worcester, Mass.
Edward Gilbert, Esq., New York, N. Y.
Rev. Elnathan Davis, Fitchburg, Mass.
" William Goodell, New York, N. Y.
" Jona. Cable, Albany, Athens County, Ohio.
" J. C. Webster, Hopkinton, Mass.
" T. R. Marvin, Winchendon, "
" T. E. Bliss, Blackstone, Mass.
Charles Ballard, Esq., Pleasant-street Baptist Church, Worcester Mass.
Rev. Horace James, Worcester, Mass.
" M. Richardson, " "
David Metcalf, Esq., " "
Rev George Trask, Fitchburg, Mass.
" Samuel Palmer, Wesleyan minister, Worcester, Mass.
" Mansfield French, of Cincinnati Conference, Ohio.
Geo. B. Cheever, D. D., New York, N. Y.
Rev. Samuel Souther, Worcester, Mass.
Dea. Ichabod Washburn, Worcester, Mass.
Rev. Henry T. Cheever, Jewett City, Conn.

Samuel A. Arnold, Quaker, Worcester, Mass.
R. G. Cochran, Congregational Church, Francistown, N. H.
Rev. George W. Basset, Washington, D. C.
" Chester Field, Methodist Ch., Worcester, Mass.
George W. Russel, Central Congregational Church, Worcester, Mass.
Ezra Bingham, Lisbon, Hanover County, Conn.
Lee Sprague, Central Congregational Church, Worcester, Mass.
Joshua Coffin, First Congregational Church, Newbury, Mass.
Rev. D. W. Fonce, Baptist Church, Worcester, Mass.
L. G. Mason, Union Congregational Church, Worcester, Mass.
J. Nichols, Salem-street Congregational Church, Worcester, Mass.
David R. Heywood, Salem-street Congregational Church, Worcester, Mass.
Rev. George Allen, Worcester, Mass.

Committee on organization presented, through their Chairman, the following Report, in order to the free discussion of which, prior to final action thereon, the Convention was resolved into a Committee of the Whole, and while discussion was pending upon the terms of the Preamble, Convention took a recess for dinner.

PREAMBLE.

Under profound convictions of the inherent sinfulness of American Slavery and Slaveholding—deeply mortified and grieved by its continued toleration and defence in the Church—fearful of the impending judgment of the Almighty upon our beloved country on account of it—and believing it is in the power of the people of God, under Divine guidance, to accomplish its overthrow, we, a company of ministers and Christians, of one mind and heart, as in duty bound by our common allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, do solemnly pledge ourselves to one another, and before God, to REMEMBER THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS AS BOUND WITH THEM, and to do all that we can for the utter destruction of that atrocious system of chattel slavery which is maintained in the United States. And as a means to that end, we hereby form ourselves into a Society, to be called the Church Anti-Slavery Society of the United States, to be governed by the following Constitution, and to maintain this declaration of principles:

Declaration of Principles.

1. The rights of man as man sacred and inalienable, without distinction of blood or races.

2. Property in man impossible, as being without grant from the Creator, and equally contrary to natural justice and to revealed religion.

3. The system of American Slavery and the practice of slaveholding essentially sinful and anti-Christian, and to be dealt with, therefore, as such, by Christian churches and ministers.

4. The utter inadequacy and impossibility of any remedy or relief from slavery,

but one that insists upon its inherent wrongfulness, its total intrinsic baseness, and denies absolutely the wild and guilty fantasy that man can have property in man!

5. The duty of one family or section of the Christian Church to rebuke and refuse fellowship to another section of the visible church, that denies the rights of man and the common brotherhood of humanity, by defending Slavery, and folding to its bosom slave sellers, slave buyers, and slave holders.

6. No compromise with Slavery allowable, but its total extinction to be demanded at once, in the name of God, who has commanded, "to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke."

7. The acknowledgment and adoption by the American Clergy and the American Churches, as the great providential and divinely appointed duty of this generation—TO DESTROY SLAVERY!

8. The Church and the Ministry to form the conscience of the nation in respect to Slavery, and to make it loyal to the Higher Law, against all unjust judgments of Courts, and unrighteous legislation of Congress.

9. The Word of God our Charter to Freedom and our armory against Slavery, and any assertion that the Lord God sanctions Slavery, practical infidelity.

10. Ultimate success sure, in the warfare of oppression, to a faithful ministry and witnessing church.

CONSTITUTION.

ART. I. The great object of this Association being to unite all Christians, on the basis of the Word of God, against Slavery, and to concentrate the energies of the Church and the Ministry upon the abolition of that great sin, the only condition of membership shall be the adoption of its pledge and principles, and members of local societies formed on these principles shall be members in full of this Society.

ART. II. The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of five, to be chosen annually by ballot.

ART. III. The duties of the Officers and Committee shall be, to provide for and call public meetings at such times and places as they see fit, in order to advocate the principles of the Society, to mould public opinion, and to induce action by the churches with reference to Slavery, and to pervade the realm of politics with the principles of religion.

ART. IV. Beside local and extraordinary meetings, which may be called at the discretion of the Officers and Committee, there shall be at least one public meeting annually during the Religious Anniversary week, in the cities of Philadelphia, New York and Boston, for the free expression of the anti-slavery principles and sentiment of the Christian Church, as declared by this Society.

ART. V. The expenses incurred by the Officers of this Society, in the prosecution of their duties, by the maintenance of public meetings, lectures, and the use of the Press, shall be met by the voluntary contributions of members, and by such donations as Benevolent individuals shall bestow for the uses of the Society.

ART. VI. This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at any meeting, notice of said amendment having been given at a previous meeting.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Convention was opened with prayer by Rev. Samuel Hunt. It was announced to the body that the Worcester County Central Association were in session in the city; and it was moved by Rev. Mr. James that a message be sent to that body, to the effect that this Convention was open to all warm-hearted anti-slavery men, and that on such terms the members of that Association would be welcome.

Discussion was resumed upon the phraseology of the preamble, and verbal alterations were made. Divers suggestions and substitutions were offered as to the name of the proposed organization, but none were agreed upon. Explanations were given of the views and motives of the Committee, in drafting the document and reporting the same.

Rev. H. T. CHEEVER wished to have it distinctly understood that the present action upon the document was not final, it being now in the hands of the body as Committee of the Whole. Convention would have another opportunity to pass upon these questions; when, after discussion, the motion should be made to adopt the whole Constitution by the Convention.

It becoming necessary for the President of the Convention to leave at this juncture, Rev. J. C. WEBSTER was appointed Chairman, and EDWARD GILBERT, Esq., Secretary, *pro tem.*

Moved by Rev. Mr. GOODELL:—That article 3d of the Constitution be so amended as to read—"and to inculcate the duties of civil government, civil rulers, and citizens, in respect to its overthrow," instead of the words—"and to pervade the realm of politics with the principles of religion."

Rev. Mr. GOODELL felt that the legitimate work of the Church and the Ministry was to instruct the people in their political duties with respect to Slavery. The expression in the Constitution, as reported, was too general. It would allow the construction of meaning the preaching of politics, but it was not specific enough as to the kind of politics to be preached. He held that the political duty of every church, and minister, and voting citizen, was to overthrow Slavery. He had so taught in a church to which he once ministered; and the church stood by him, and they agreed upon men to be nominated and voted for, to office, in church prayer meetings. And the result was, in due time, that the church was saved the trouble of nominating, for the leading men of the town took very good care to put up only such men as anti-slavery Christians could conscientiously vote for; and it came to pass that, in town meeting, they passed a resolution unanimously, not to

let the Fugitive Slave Law be enforced within their limits. So much for the church and the minister, united, in teaching men their political duties in respect to Slavery.

Rev. Mr. RICHARDSON contended it was as much a minister's duty to preach politics, in the true sense of the word, as to preach Christ; that a minister could not preach Christ truly without preaching politics. Our political and Christian duties are inseparable. Our Christianity was to be carried into everything. And if we had *anything* to do, as Christians and Ministers, it was to carry Christianity into politics. It was the severance of the two that had nearly proved our ruin; and the great want of the times was, the Christianization of our *politics* and *business*. He preached as freely in his pulpit against the powers that be, when they do wrong, as he should against Ahab and Jezebel, were they now on the stage; and he asked no man's permit for it. It belonged to him to do so, as a Christian minister. He would have the Constitution explicit on that point.

The amendment was carried.

It was here suggested that a new Committee be raised to report another and shorter preamble;—that the one before the Convention was more like a statement of the whole platform than a preamble.

EDWARD GILBERT, Esq.:—Why have any preamble at all? By common acceptation, the preamble furnishes a rule of interpretation for the Constitution which follows, and should therefore contain a concise statement of the views and purposes of the framers. Could the preamble be made shorter without destroying its character as a preamble? Besides, another reference to a new Committee is hardly in good taste or propriety, not to say quite irregular. One Committee has reported it as it reads, and it now remains for the Convention to act upon it—not to refer it.

Objections were raised to the phrase—"*inherent sin of Slaveholding*," occurring in the preamble, and a motion was made to strike it out.

Rev. Mr. CUSHING maintained that such terms would lead to great misunderstanding. A large majority of Anti-Slavery Christians do not believe Slaveholding to be a sin *per se*. This is the prevailing anti-slavery theology. This is the theology taught at Andover and Yale, and believed by nineteen-twentieths of the Christian ministers of New England. The use of these words would raise a storm of opposition, such as would immediately crush this movement. He was an anti-slavery man, and had been for twenty years. His room at Yale College was known as the anti-slavery head-quarters, and he was

Secretary of the Yale Anti-Slavery Society when Sherman L. Booth was its President.

Rev. Mr. JAMES was as much an anti-slavery man as any present. He was in perfect sympathy with this movement, and, as he apprehended, so were all the anti-slavery Christians in New England. It seemed to him that those who are in sympathy should be united. This objection is only to the phraseology, and that because it will lead to misunderstanding, and cause the failure of the movement. His antecedents were before the world. He had always been opposed to Slavery, had preached against it, and should continue to do so, whether he belonged to this society or not. A man, as he believed, *may* hold slaves for benevolent purposes.

Dr. CHEEVER :—Slave-holding is the concrete sin: Slavery, the system that grows out of it. We do not wish to aim at an abstraction. Slave-holding is man-stealing, a crime punishable by God's law with death. The relation of master to slave is not recognized by God's Word, and cannot be begun or maintained without man-stealing. No one, in buying slaves to set them free, exercises the legal functions of a slave-holder. That is *man-protecting*, not slave-holding or man-stealing. The sin is inherent in slave-holding, not in the system, except through this. Slave-holding was before the system of Slavery, and the system was instituted to protect and maintain it. The system which protects and maintains a sin is wrong, but only so because the *sin* is wrong. When the sin goes, the system will go with it. God's Word is explicit in reference to the sin, but says nothing of the system. We are to take God's Word.

We are not to dilute God's Word to bring it down either to men's low ideas or evasive technicalities. A Christian man, who holds a fellow man, to preserve him from the cruelty of pirates, who would make a slave of him, is not a slave-holder, but a freeholder, the holder of a freeman, to keep him from being bought, sold, or held by anybody else as a slave. But if he himself, even though professing the highest benevolence, holds him as a slave, as a chattel, as his property, then he is a slave-holder, not a man-holder. If, under the right to do wrong, which the law gives him, he holds a fellow being in subjection against his will, giving him no wages, setting the grasp of slave law on him if he attempt to escape, then he may affirm ever so earnestly that slave-holding in itself is not sin, and that he practises slave-holding for the slave's good, and not for his own profit; but this evasion can avail him nothing. This evasion we must take entirely away. SLAVE-holding in all cases is sin. The holding of a man as a slave, as property, is sin,

and can be nothing else, under all circumstances. The holding of a man as your brother, of whom God has said to you, Thou art thy brother's keeper, the keeper of his freedom and his rights, the holding of him under slave law and by means of slave law, out of such brotherly love, to keep him from being a slave, is not slave-holding, but brother-keeping, for a brother's good.

Now to call his benevolent action slave-holding, and on such ground to say that slave-holding is not always sinful, is to frame a falsehood, an evasion, under cover of which the slave-holder can effectually beat off all your blows against his guilt. He can tell you that the sin is not in the act but the intention; and how dare you, or can you, pronounce on his intention? His slave-holding is carried on under justificatory circumstances and with benevolent intentions. He holds a slave, and holds him as a slave, but avers that he holds him for the slave's good.

Now from God's Word it is plain that the holding of a man as a slave is sin, a sin worthy of death, under all circumstances. Slave-holding is the holding of a man as a slave, not as a free man, and therefore, slave-holding under all possible circumstances, is sin. But the holding of a man, not as property, but as a free man, to keep him from being a slave, is not slave-holding, and cannot be permitted to pass as such without the greatest perversion and injury. This is the technical evasion under which you would shield slave-holding and the slave-holder from the withering denunciations of God's Word against holding human beings as slaves. If you do not hold them as *slaves*, you are not a slave-holder; if you *do* hold them as slaves you *are* a slave-holder. Your merely holding them *in the eye of the law* as slaves does not make you a slave-holder, if you hold them for their own rights and protection; for you do not hold them as slaves, but as free men; and the law cannot make you a slave-holder, though, if it could get hold of those men whom you hold as free men, it would make them slaves. You cannot properly be called a slave-holder, unless you yourself hold these human beings over which the law gives you such power, as your property, your slaves. But if you do not hold them as your slaves, you are no more a slave-holder than any man who hires his servants, and pays them their wages on a voluntary contract, is a slave-holder. But if you hold them as your property, then you are guilty of the crime of slave-holding, which, under all possible circumstances, is sin.

The Convention here adjourned for a public meeting at half-past seven o'clock in the evening, at Mechanics' Hall, and to meet for business at nine o'clock next morning.

The President of the Convention, Hon. Elmer Brigham, took the chair in the evening, and the doings of the day were read by Edward Gilbert, Esq., secretary *pro tem.* After which the Rev. Dr. Cheever addressed a large audience, enforcing the Bible argument against slavery with irresistible logic. He maintained the position that such a thing as property in man was nowhere countenanced in the Bible; that wherever buying and selling of servants is found, it meant simply the buying and selling of services, not of men; and that God's Fugitive Law, while it commanded the restoration of every species of property, expressly enjoined that servants escaped from bondage were not to be given up to their masters. These truths were so thoroughly well understood by the people of Judea, in the time of Christ and the apostles, that there was no need of uttering a single word in addition, in denunciation of slavery. Accordingly the New Testament says very little about the question. The speaker then applied his logic with merciless severity to the system of slavery, as maintained and defended in the United States, and concluded by an earnest appeal to all Christians, to separate themselves from those who sanction, by practice or theory, the holding of their fellow-men in slavery. He also urged the duty of Christian ministers, to make use of a proper construction of the Scriptures in fulminating deserved anathemas against the institution of slavery, so contrary to both the natural and revealed law of God.

Second Day, March 2d.

Session opened at nine o'clock A. M., with prayer by Rev. Samuel Souther.

The doings of the previous day were read from the Worcester Transcript. Discussion was resumed on the motion to strike out from the preamble the words, "Inherent sinfulness of slave-holding."

Rev. W. H. Beecher.—Slave-holding is essentially a sin. If there are exceptions to this rule they can be stated. So it might be said that drunkenness is a sin, though a man, in an exceptional case, may be innocent, as where the liquor is forced down him; yet the rule that *drunkenness is a sin* should stand.

Rev. Mr. Allen.—The expression is tautological. If slavery means anything it means slave-holding.

Rev. Mr. Basset.—The tautology is more apparent than real. Slave-holding is a phrase bearing a definite and distinct application, as is well known.

Rev. Mr. Cushing reviewed the different phases of anti-slavery

sentiment, as expressed at different times and by different parties, and in various newspapers, religious and political platforms, &c., and argued that the object of the convention was to unite all warm-hearted Christians against the common foe. Gerrit Smith acknowledged the power of the 3,050 clergymen of New England, when they united in a protest against the Nebraska Bill, and he thanked them for it. The power consisted in harmony and union. It is idle to alienate so large and powerful a body by the use of one word. We did not come here to make language—we were not to form a philological society, or to fix interpretations. But we are here to use language according to its legitimate and common signification. If the public made a distinction between slavery and slave-holding, admitting, that while slavery was wrong, the legal relations of slave-holding might be innocent, let us recognize it, and not undertake to reform the language of mankind.

Rev. Mr. GOODELL.—We are here to put ourselves right. I we are in the right, we shall have the majority, for God is always in the majority. We wish to use the most suitable and exact words, and fear nothing for the result. If we have all the world on our side, and yet are wrong in reference to *the thing*, we shall gain nothing except wisdom by defeat.

Rev. Mr. ALLEN did not wish to be misunderstood. He meant slavery to include the practice of slave-holding, and would be satisfied with the words "sinfulness of slavery in theory and practice."

Rev. Mr. CABLE had lived in a slave State, and knew that there was a distinction there made between slave-holding and slavery; and the same was made by many theologians.

Rev. H. T. CHEEVER had become painfully convinced that it was owing to the general unwillingness of doctors of divinity to call the act of slave-holding a sin, that they were utterly powerless against the aggressions of slavery. It was so before the Tract Society. In the caucus preparatory to the meeting last May, at the church on Lafayette square, we had heard the position that the act of slave-holding was necessarily sinful, stigmatized as ultra and radical, and unfit to be upon the lips of Christian men in the Tract Society, and we had heard the distinction attempted between the principles of common morality and the dogmas of reformatory morality, and that the latter were out of place in the Tract Society. And going before the great meeting on such a platform, what did they meet but ignominious defeat? That they would always meet, till they took the high ground of the intrinsic sinfulness of slave-holding as the only reason for meddling with slavery at all by the Tract Society or the Church.

He belonged to a large association in which there prevailed the view of slavery as not *malum in se*, but only in its attendant evils, and it rendered all who held it powerless against the great wickedness. Had often contended with brethren that slave-holding was just as much *malum in se* as murder was. Let *us* say it in our platform, that there was inherent sinfulness in it, and then we should be right, and we might do something toward destroying the tyranny of an unmeaning dogma as applied to slavery.

The views of opposing parties and wings in the great anti-slavery army were here adverted to by several speakers, and the supposed leaders of different schools of anti-slavery sentiment, were personally designated.

Rev. Mr. BASSET wished all personalities avoided. We were here to discuss a document on the basis of God's truth, and not to discuss individuals or *their* opinions.

Rev. W. H. BEECHER wished to take the broad ground of truth. We must take the ground that slave-holding is sin. This is the very point we are contending for. The Presbyterians had always taken the ground claimed by the other side, and nothing, therefore, would come of it. We do not wish to organize now to go the same route over again, and come out nowhere. The people would not misunderstand, for they were ahead of us in this respect. He was not a stickler for *terms*, but would contend for the truth.

Rev. Mr. CUSHING belonged to an association of seventeen ministers; and if the word *Slave-holding* was used, but one out of that association would come into this movement.

Rev. Mr. FRENCH was from the West. Out there he had heard the farmers say, that, in opening up their farms, when tall oaks and knotty beeches were left standing here and there, and the under-brush only cut down, the gradual rotting and falling of the branches and trunks caused more loss to the farmers, in the spoiling of their grain and killing their cattle, than would have been all the expense of cutting them down and rooting them out, in the beginning. He thought we had better profit by their experiences, and make clean work at the beginning. Better out with stumps and roots, and clear the ground now.

This monster evil of Slavery was like the mammoth tree of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in whose wide-spread branches unclean birds had been lodging, and beasts of the earth gathering to its shelter. He would not be content to merely girdle the tree, nor yet to lop off only a few of its branches: but he trusted this society would be the angel of a kind Providence to cut off every limb, and to hew down its gnarled and defiant trunk, till nothing was left of it but a mass of ruins.

Reference had been made to "the union of the greatest number possible" in this effort. Union, and the union of great men especially, is desirable. But there may be union of men, without union with God. What we want is union with the truth, and union with God, in this matter. If God be with us, who, then, can be against us? Great men are not always wise, nor yet always strong.

God never depended on numbers. He could save by few as well as by many. His own Church (the Methodist Episcopal) had gloried in numbers, but God had humbled her. A large portion had sloughed off who took the "South Side view" of "the sum of all villainies;" and it was feared that when those in the Church who fear God and work righteousness, shall take a stand at their approaching General Conference, the work of humiliation and purifying will be found to have been done only in part. If the work be done by the force of numbers, no glory would be given to God. With him, the "single eye," the fearing God rather than man, the having no respect of persons, is the test of soldiership.

At the first blast of the war-trumpet, when Israel was about to be delivered out of the hands of the Midianitish oppressor, under the leadership of the barley-thresher, no less than thirty-two thousand men rushed into the field. After a full survey of the numbers and strength of their enemy, the danger to be encountered, and the standing and character of God's chosen leader for them, there was trembling in the ranks. All who were fearful and unbelieving were permitted to return home, which was the proper place for them; and of his own real state of mind, each man was allowed to determine for himself. Twenty-two thousand men were of this class. Ten thousand determined, and very honestly, no doubt, that they were strong enough for the work. And, doubtless, they were, in their own eyes; but God, who seeth not as man seeth, determined otherwise, and He applied the test. All were to march over a brook, and in the manner of their drinking, a difference would appear. Some lapped up the water with the tongue, as a dog lappeth: scooping it up in a hurry, and putting their hands to their mouth, as they passed over. Others bowed down on their knees to drink water, and took it, as one would say, rather too leisurely for soldiers. Now, this was a peculiar test. The Lord had chosen three hundred as the instruments of victory. And even *they* were not allowed to achieve it by arms. For the Lord was with *Gideon*—and Gideon commanded each one to get a pitcher, and they all got pitchers; and each one to get a lamp, and they all got lamps. And then he commanded them all to blow their trumpets, and they all blowed their

trumpets, and broke their pitchers, and cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Thus the Lord gave the victory, and to His name was all the glory. So here: we are not to think what the professors at Yale or Andover will think of us, but only whether the *Lord* will approve. The victory is the Lord's. He will choose His instruments, appoint the number of them, and to His name will be the glory. It is no concern of ours whether he appoint this work to be done by three hundred or three, or whether the men are theological professors or barley-threshers. He often wished the D.D.'s of Yale and Andover had to mount the old Itinerant horse of Methodism. It would jolt some of their folly out of them.

He offered, as an amendment, to substitute the words, "*inherent sin of slave-holding in principle and practice.*"

Dr. CHEEVER preferred the original form. Or, if any change, he would prefer the words, "*sinfulness of slave-holding and of the system that grows out of it.*" This goes to the bottom of the matter. Slave-holding is the *sin*. The system comes afterwards. We must strike at the *sin*. David would, doubtless, have agreed with Nathan as to the abstract sin of adultery, previous to the affair with Uriah. But he could not endure the terrible denunciation, "Thou art the man!" in reference to his own act. It was the *act* that the prophet aimed at.

Rev. Mr. ALLEN was opposed to the word. He wanted a broad platform. The thing was repeated too often.

Rev. H. T. CHEEVER.—Would the brother accept the terms, the "sinfulness of Slaveholding?"

Rev. Mr. ALLEN.—That is what I have always believed.

Rev. H. T. CHEEVER.—Will you accept it here?

Rev. Mr ALLEN.—It is not the right place for it. It is expressed elsewhere.

Rev. Mr. DAVIS believed that the South would understand, and respect an issue like this, taken upon the inherent sinfulness of Slave-holding. It was his custom to exclude Slaveholders and the justifiers of slaveholding from his Communion. Not long since, a lady of wealth and distinction, from the South, was present at his church on Communion Sabbath. He gave the invitation and notice of exclusion in the usual form. The lady did not go, but remained to express to him in unequivocal terms, her gratification at the stand he had taken, and her approval of his consistency.

Rev. Mr. BASSET.—*Slave owning* is a legal term; but Slaveholding implies that there is voluntary action on the part of the owner, to restrain the liberty of the slave. The Slaveholder holds the slave without

the slave's consent. That only is Slaveholding. Holding a man at his own request, that he may be preserved for freedom, out of the clutches of another who will keep him as a slave, is a very different thing from Slaveholding.

Rev. Mr. WEBSTER.—Here is the gist of the whole movement. We had better go home, unless we can assert Slaveholding, the concrete act, a sin. The movement began in Massachusetts. He did not want any brethren to think it started in New York. It originated here.

Rev. Mr. ALLEN would accept the terms "Slavery and the practice of Slaveholding."

Rev. Mr. JAMES had been pointed at in all the remarks, and did not wish any here to think that he denied that Slaveholding is a sin. He only objected to the word inherent, because it would bring down a storm of opposition, which would crush us in the beginning.

Rev. H. T. CHEEVER.—Does not the sin inhere in the act?

Rev. Mr. JAMES.—Sin is always in the heart of the sinner.

Rev. H. T. CHEEVER.—But the act is the affection of the heart carried into execution, and that is the thing aimed at in God's laws, is the thing called sin. A man's act without intention is no act, but is an accident. In every instance of voluntary Slaveholding there is inherent sin. Man-keeping for freedom, with the man's consent, is no more Slaveholding than man-killing by accident is murder. But sin inheres alike in the act of murder and in the act of Slaveholding.

Rev. Mr. JAMES would accept the terms "inherent sinfulness of Slavery in principle and practice."

Rev. Mr. CUSHING hoped that the body would take deliberate and strong ground, to suit themselves. Their act would exclude him, and he would venture to say, nineteen-twentieths of the ministers of New England.

Rev. Mr. CABLE knew that Slaveholders had often hid themselves under this distinction, between the sinfulness of Slavery in general and the innocence of Slaveholding in particular cases, and therefore urged that the Convention would be explicit.

Rev. Mr. GOODELL respected Brother Cushing for his honesty, but presumed he would not exclude Slaveholders from his communion or pulpit.

Rev. Mr. CUSHING honored and respected this body, and would say that he had excluded a pastor of a Slaveholding church from his pulpit, though he offended several of his parishioners by it.

Rev. Mr. W. H. BEECHER knew Mr. Cushing to be a politic man, and was unwilling to have this Convention take an odious step just to give

him an excuse for staying out of it. We must proceed wisely and strongly, and declare Slaveholding inherently sinful.

Mr. METCALF perceived a similarity of sentiment, though a disagreement in the use of words. We ought to agree upon language which will unite all in reference to the abominations of Slavery, in all its principles and practices.

Rev. Mr. BEECHER.—The difference is only in reference to the word *inherent;* the use of this word will, in the opinion of some brethren, create a difference between honest anti slavery men.

Rev. Mr. BASSET.—The very opposition to the word is a good reason for retaining it.

DR. CHEEVER had contended all along with the American Board in reference to the sin's being *inherent.* He now agreed with Mr. Basset that the opposition to that word under the present circumstances was a good reason for retaining it.

He said he was reminded on this occasion, as on many others, of that profound apothegm uttered by Edmund Burke in defence of a system of radical reform, and of the thoroughness and boldness needed in carrying it out, namely, that we must not be hampered by the timid prudence with which a tame circumspection so frequently enervates the works of beneficence. In doing good, Burke said, we are cautious, languid, easily deterred by obstacles and oppositions, and *of all things afraid of being too much in the right.* But the works of malice and injustice are executed in a very different manner; they are finished in a bold, masterly style, touched as they are with the spirit of those vehement passions, that call forth all our energies, whenever we oppress and persecute.

Let us, on the present occasion, lay this wisdom to heart, and beware of such lukewarmness and timidity, in pleading the cause of the oppressed, and contriving their deliverance. Let us adopt the bold tactics of the oppressor, in behalf of the oppressed; we shall never conquer if we do not. Let us affix to this word *Slaveholding,* the blackest stigma of crime that God's truth allows; let us brand its guilt with the utmost degree of reprobation marked for it in the Word of God, going just as far as God permits, and no farther. Then we are right, but with any thing less than God's truth, in the conflict against this damning sin, we are wrong. We must take the Prophet Nathan's mode, not waiting to settle definitions, or make a compromise by abstractions, but declaring plainly, This is the sin, and thou art the man.

And we must beware of giving to our adversaries, by means of these abstractions and hair-splittings, and word technicalities, the very oppor-

tunity of evasion which they desire. We only manufacture a shield for the slaveholder, and cover his guilt with it, by this tenderness as to slaveholding, this reluctance to stamp the act of sin *as sin*, and to connect the quality of guilt always with the name. The policy of admitting that there can possibly be such a thing as a just and Christian slaveholding, reminds us of what Dr. Rae told us, in his lecture at New York, on the wonders of the Arctic regions, about the sagacity of the foxes in stealing and devouring the hares. He said that in order to get near enough to their prey to seize them, the foxes would imitate the position, motion, and appearance of the hares, squatting on their hind legs, hanging down their forelegs, elongating their ears, and thus they would get near enough to their unsuspecting victims to seize and destroy them. And thus the slaveholder will grasp and detain his victims, by the pretence of doing it as a Christian, with good intentions, and under justificatory circumstances. Admit that slaveholding is ever consistent with Christianity, and foxes might not only make themselves hares, but wolves lambs, on such a principle. Let us call things by their right names.

Dr. Rae told us likewise of the cunning of the foxes, when they found out the manner in which the hunters set their gun-traps, with the trigger fastened by a line to the bait, so that the moment the foxes attempted to take the bait, the gun went off, and the thief was shot in the very act of robbery. When they found this out, they would dig a trench in the snow underneath the line and bait, and then, advancing to the bait below the range of the shot, would draw it down and run off with it, while the shot whizzed over their heads perfectly harmless. Just thus you are furnishing tactics of evasion to the slaveholder, by which he can escape the charge of such guilt as the Bible drives at him. By refusing to brand slaveholding as sin, you enable him to steal away his prey, unscathed by the charge of God's Word against him. He takes your bait, but avoids your shot; and you cannot touch him. It is not possible to level him, but with the grape-shot of God's Word fired right at him, as a slaveholder, and at his slaveholding, as always sin. You can do nothing but with the utmost plainness, applying the very denunciations of the Word of God. Use God's Word as he gave it to be used, and you will conquer. But you will never conquer by a war upon mere deserted outposts, by preaching or tract-making on the moral duties that grow out of the existence of slavery as an institution, or the evils of its abuse.

You will never conquer by inquiring, as has been done deliberately, in high quarters, as if it were a knock-down argument, Is Judge Jessup

an Abolitionist? Is Dr. Tyng an Abolitionist? Is Dr. Gordon an Abolitionist? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? This expediency is the religion and tactics of snobs, and we ought not, as Christian men, to suffer ourselves to come within a hundred thousand leagues of adopting it. Let us cast ourselves on God, and on the word of his power, which is able to save us. Let us take that word as our weapon, and strike with it, and advance with it, as God would have us do, and God will be with us, and we shall be strong in him, although this movement in its beginning should be reduced down, not to Gideon's three hundred, but to only three.

Dr. Cheever said it had been properly asked how the Church could possibly exclude slaveholders from its communion, unless slaveholding were declared to be a sin. Denying it to be in itself sinful, the American Board, on this ground, refuse even to advise the exclusion of slaveholders from the Choctaw and Cherokee Churches, and thus set the lamentable example before the whole world of the most venerated Christian body in the country sanctioning this terrible sin. Even if Christian men only *seem* to be slaveholders, because they are defending their fellow-beings from slavery, and hold them only to set them free, so that they are not slaveholders, but truly their brother's protector and keeper, still, while subject to such an appearance of evil, they had much better stay out of the Church, than, by being admitted into it give occasion to the dreadful reproach of a slaveholding Christianity. Let the Church of Christ expel from her sacred communion every sanction, even in appearance, of this great wickedness.

Rev. Mr. HUNT wished the vote to be immediately taken.

The motion on the amendment was lost by a majority of nearly five to one.

The convention then adjourned, to meet at the Union Vestry, at two o'clock, P. M.

AFTERNOON SESSION, at Union Church Vestry.

Opened with prayer by Rev. Mr. GOODELL. The articles of the Constitution were taken up *seriatim* and adopted.

It was then moved that the Constitution be finally adopted as a whole by the Convention, and carried unanimously.

The Declaration of Principles was then finally passed upon and adopted.

The following resolutions, were then offered by Rev. SAMUEL HUNT, and adopted unanimously by the Convention:

Resolved, In view of honest differences of opinion among anti-slavery Christians in regard to the Bible view of slavery, their relation to slaveholding Churches, and to those ecclesiastical bodies and benevolent societies that embrace or tolerate such, as also their *duties* to the civil government, that the Executive Committee be instructed to diffuse such information and discussions through the periodical press and by means of *tracts*, as in their judgment shall seem desirable; and that they also confer with the American Tract Society at Boston in relation to the publication of such tracts as may be procured for these purposes.

Resolved, That the Executive Committee be instructed to call the attention of the various local associations, of the different Evangelical denominations in sympathy with this movement, to the objects of this society, with the request that they shall recommend to the ministers and Churches in their connections, to form local societies in accordance with the plan recommended in the constitution now adopted.

Resolved, That the Executive Committee, as soon as they are justified by the state of the treasury, be requested to employ public lecturers to explain and defend the principles of the Society, and promote the general purpose for which it has been formed.

The following additional resolutions were then offered by EDWARD GILBERT, Esq., and adopted, with one or two dissenting votes:

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Convention, the charge so often made by pro-slavery men, that slavery exists by Divine authority in the Word of God, is without a shred or shadow of foundation, and hence an impious slander on the Holy name of God.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Convention, the system of domestic service, instituted by God for his chosen people, was a wise and just institution, and was intended as a safeguard against chattel slavery.

The following resolutions were then offered by Mr. GOODELL, and adopted:

RESOLUTIONS.

1. *Resolved*, That American Slavery, as defined by its own code, and as exhibited in the practice of slave-holding, is a system of usages by which human beings are claimed, held, and treated as PROPERTY—"goods and CHATTELS personal" "in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, *to all intents*, constructions, and purposes whatsoever," a slave being "one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs"—whose "master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, and his labor"—one who "can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything, but what must belong to his master." (2 Brevard's Digest, 229; Prince's Digest, 446, &c.; Civil Code, Art. 35, 173. See Stroud's Sketch, and American Slave Code, Chap. I.)

2. *Resolved*, That, under this code, and according to its established usages and daily and general practice, slaves are regarded and treated as the subjects of sale, purchase, barter, mortgage, sales at auction and shipments, as absolutely as any other property, and by the same tenure; are seized and sold to pay the debts of their pretended owners, while living, and for the settlement of their estates after their

decease; are transmitted by inheritance or by will, to heirs at law or legatees, and distributed like other property. [Vide Amer. Slave Code.]

3. *Resolved, further.* That, under this code and these usages, *slaves* as property may be USED, absolutely, by their owners, for their own profit or pleasure, to minister to their avarice, their cruelty, their pride, or their lusts; that slaves own no property, nor make any contract, not even the contract of marriage, cannot constitute families, nor have any security from separation of the nearest kindred by sale; can have no marital rights, no parental rights, no family government, no family education, no family protection: that the power of the slave-master [whether owner, overseer, or hirer] is virtually unlimited, and the slave is without protection from its cruel exercise; that as chattels they may be worked at the discretion of the master, as other working cattle are; that their labor is coerced, without wages, extorted only by fear; that their food, clothing, and dwellings are at the discretion or convenience of their masters; that slaves cannot sue their masters; that they have no power of self-redemption or choice of masters; that the relation is hereditary and perpetual; that they are denied all right to education, to religious liberty, to rights of conscience; that, as between masters and slaves, the slaves can enjoy no privileges as religious and thinking beings, except such as their masters, whether Christians or Infidels, sober or drunken, may accord to them.

4. *Resolved,* That the origin and pretended authority and validity of this so-called "legal relation" are to be found, not in the institutions of the patriarchs, or in the code of Moses (which knew nothing of human chattelhood, or of involuntary or unpaid labor, or of any of the oppressions and abominations of modern slavery), but in that African Slave Trade which our own laws now punish as piracy, in the usages of barbarous and heathen African tribes, upon which our pro-slavery legislators and jurists have ingrafted some of the worst features of the Slave Code of ancient heathen Rome (leaving out its merciful provisions for self-redemption and change of masters), in open violation of the British Constitution and English common law, during our colonial history, and of our own Declaration of Independence afterwards; neither the slave trade nor slave-holding ever having been legalized by any act of Parliament, by any of the colonial legislatures, or by the legislatures of the several States, but only assumed and taken for granted as a previously existing relation [contrary to truth], thus reposing only on brute force, and extended, accordingly, over all classes whom the slaveholders have been able to seize upon and retain,—over Indians, free colored persons, and whites, especially over all the infant children of slave mothers, including the children of slaveholders themselves.

5. *Resolved,* That the relation of the slaves to society and to civil government grows out of their relations to their masters *as property,* and is determined and defined by it, insomuch that the slave is not regarded by the government that tolerates slavery, as having any rights, or as being the subject of legal protection, so that a slave cannot be a party to a civil suit, nor give testimony to injuries inflicted on slaves, and are held subject to the will of all "*white persons.*" Yet they are held amenable, as persons, to unequal and barbarous penal enactments, are forbidden to be educated even by their masters, and denied the Bible and the privileges of free social worship:—regulations which even the slave master himself may not relax or abrogate. The statutes of the Slave States not only make no pro-

vision for general emancipation, but obstruct and prevent emancipations by the master. And the Constitutions of some of the States forbid the legislatures to abolish slavery.

6. *Resolved*, That the slave system requires for its security the persecution and proscription of the free people of color, conceding to them only a portion of their rights, and exposing them to the danger of being re-enslaved.

7. *Resolved*, That the *white* people of the Slave States, whether slaveholders or non-slaveholders, are deprived by the Slave Code of some of their essential rights, including the right to instruct their slaves, the liberty of the press and of free speech, and cannot be regarded as a people possessing civil, religious, and political freedom.

8. *Resolved*, That the rights of the white people of the non-slaveholding States are directly and indirectly invaded by the slave codes of the slave States and of the Federal Government; their liberties, to a great extent, have already fallen a sacrifice, and can never be secure while slaveholding in this country continues. Therefore,

9. *Resolved*, That such being the leading facts of American slavery, and such its fruits, no person not culpably ignorant of the facts upon which he passes judgment, can, without violence to his moral nature, pretend that such a system can be innocent, nor otherwise than wicked and criminal in the highest degree.

And no person not culpably ignorant of the Bible, as well as of the facts of slavery, can, without doing violence to his reason and conscience, pretend to believe that the Bible sanctions such a system, or does otherwise than condemn it, by all its leading doctrines and precepts, as a system characterized, at every point, by a total opposition to the law of God, and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a system of superlative iniquity, of selfishness, of malignity, of impiety, of oppression, the deadliest enemy of the Christian religion of which any conception can be formed.

10. *Resolved*, That the practice of slaveholding cannot differ essentially, in its moral character, from that of the slave code that defines and sustains it, nor from that of the slave system, with which they both harmonize—or which is composed of both of them.

Because, slaveholding endorses both the code and the system. Because slaveholding is, itself, primarily, *the* sin, which the slave code and the slave system become sinful in sustaining. Because slaveholding came first, and contrived and produced both the code and the system, for its own security and protection. And because, if slave-*holding* were abolished, there would be an end, both to the slave code and the slave system.

11. *Resolved*, That those who, while declining to justify, directly, the slave *code* and the slave *system*, insist, nevertheless, that the "*legal relation*" between slave owner and slave may be held innocently, overlook three important considerations, namely:

First, That strictly speaking, and according to the time-honored maxims of universal or common law, as laid down by the most eminent jurists, ancient and modern, there can be no such thing as such a "*legal relation*," nor any valid law for slavery. *Second*, That if there could be, it does not exist in *this* country, (by the testimony of eminent slaveholding statesmen and jurists,) there being a total absence of any municipal, positive, statute law, creating such a "*relation*." *And, third*, That if there *were* such law, and such "*legal relation*," the holding of that "*relation*" would be of the same moral character with that of the law, and the relation

iniquitous, unrighteous, criminal, a violation of the law of justice, the law of God.

12. *Resolved*, That slaveholding is sinful, because slaveholding is man-stealing, a crime forbidden by the Mosaic code, and ranked by an inspired apostle, with the most flagitious offences, with the murder of fathers and of mothers.

13. *Resolved*, That those who deny slaveholding to be "man-stealing," say, in effect, that there never has been, is not now, and cannot hereafter be, any such crime as "man-stealing." They can neither produce an instance of it, nor describe, nor define it, nor tell the process by which it can be committed by any man, otherwise than by describing acts equivalent to slaveholding. This is evident—

Because stealing is taking what belongs to another without his consent. Every man belongs to himself, and the slaveholder claims and holds possession of a man without his consent.

Because, this is generally admitted to be the fact in respect to the original kidnapper of a man, and common sense and common law hold the receiver and holder of what is stolen to be a partaker of the theft. The law of Moses says, expressly, "He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, *or* if he be found in his hand, (i. e. in his possession,) he shall surely be put to death."

Because, moreover, the slaves of this country are mostly in the hands of the original kidnappers, who stole them in their infancy, and enslaved them.

14. *Resolved*, That those who say, as some do, that the holding of a slave may be innocent, provided he be well treated, and provided he be held for his own benefit, take for granted what is not true, namely, that an immortal, accountable being may be well treated, when treated as a chattel, and denied the rights of our common human nature—that it may possibly be for his own good to be thus treated, to be accounted an article of property instead of an heir of immortality, created a little lower than the angels.

15. *Resolved*, That those who place the evils of slavery in its "*abuses*" and not in the "*relation*," (if they mean what their words naturally indicate,) affirm the "relation" described by the slave code—the "relation" of the slave owner and his human chattel, to be a natural relation, like the relation of husband and wife, parent and child; thus they sanction the slave code and the slave system; and virtually confirm the position of the ultra pro-slavery men who call slaveholding a natural relation, "before and higher than any constitutional sanction," and who, therefore, deny the rights of any State or National Governments to abolish or to exclude slavery.

The Preamble, Declaration of Principles, and Constitution, as amended and finally adopted by the Convention, stand as follows:

PREAMBLE.

Under profound convictions of the inherent sinfulness of slaveholding and the great system of American Slavery that has grown out of slaveholding—deeply mortified and grieved by its continued toleration and defence in the Church—fearful of the impending judgment of the Almighty upon our beloved country on account of it—and believing it is in the power of the people of God, under Divine guidance, to accomplish its overthrow—we, a company of ministers and Christians, of one mind and heart, as in duty bound, by our common allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, do solemnly pledge ourselves to one another and before God, TO RE-

MEMBER THOSE THAT ARE IN BONDS AS BOUND WITH THEM, and to do all that we can for the utter destruction of that atrocious system of chattel-slavery which is maintained in the United States; and, as a means to that end, we hereby form ourselves into a society, to be called The Church Anti-Slavery Society of the United States, to be governed by the following Constitution, and to maintain this Declaration of Principles:

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

1. The rights of man as man sacred and inalienable, without distinction of blood or races.

2. Property in man impossible, as being without grant from the Creator, and equally contrary to natural justice and to revealed religion.

3. The system of American Slavery and the practice of slaveholding essentially sinful and anti-Christian, and to be dealt with, therefore, as such by Christian Churches and Ministers.

4. The utter inadequacy and impossibility of any remedy or relief from slavery, but one that insists upon its inherent wrongfulness, its total intrinsic baseness, and denies absolutely the "wild and guilty fantasy that man can have property in man!"

5. The duty of one family or section of the Christian Church to rebuke and refuse fellowship to another section of the visible Church that denies the rights of man and the common brotherhood of humanity, by defending slavery, and folding to its bosom slave-sellers, slave-buyers, and slave-holders.

6. No compromise with slavery allowable, but its total extinction to be demanded at once, in the name of God, who has commanded "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke."

7. The total abolition of the vast system of American Slavery to be accepted as the providential mission and duty of the American Clergy and the American Churches of this generation.

8. The Church and the Ministry to form the conscience of the nation in respect to slavery, and to make it loyal to the Law of God, against all unjust judgments of Courts and unrighteous legislation of Congress.

9. The Word of God our charter for freedom and our armory against slavery, and any assertion that the Lord God sanctions slavery practical infidelity.

10. Ultimate success sure, in the warfare with oppression, to a faithful ministry, and witnessing church.

CONSTITUTION.

The object of this Association being to unite all Christians on the basis of the Word of God against slavery, and to concentrate the energies of the Christian Ministry and of Christian Churches upon the extinction of that great sin, the conditions of membership shall be the adoption of its pledge and principles, and the payment of an annual contribution for its support. And members of local societies formed on these principles shall be members in full of this Society.

ART I. The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, an Auditor, and an Executive Committee of five, to be chosen annually by ballot.

ART. II. The duties of the officers and committee shall be to provide for and call public meetings, at such times and places as they see fit, in order to advocate the principles of the Society, to mould public opinion, to induce action by the churches with reference to slavery, and to inculcate the duties of civil government, of civil rulers, and of citizens, in respect to its overthrow.

ART. III. Besides local and extraordinary meetings, which may be called at the discretion of the officers and the committee, there shall be at least one public meeting annually, during the Religious Anniversary Week, in the cities of Philadelphia, New York and Boston, for the free expression of the anti-slavery principles and sentiments of Christian Churches, as declared by this Society.

ART. IV. The expenses incurred by the officers of the Society, in the prosecution of their duties, by the maintenance of public meetings, lectures, and the use of the press, shall be met by the resources derived from the annual contributions of members, and by such donations as benevolent individuals and churches shall bestow for the use of the Society.

ART. V. This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any meeting, notice of said amendment having been given at any previous meeting.

The Chair then appointed Edward Gilbert, Esq., Rev. Samuel Hunt, and Rev. Jonathan Cable, as a Committee on Nomination, to report candidates for office in the Church Anti-Slavery Society of the United States.

The Nominating Committee reported the following list of names for officers, which were unanimously elected:

President—Rev. J. C. Webster, of Hopkinton.

Vice-President—Rev. W. H. Beecher, of North Brookfield.

Secretary—Rev. Henry T. Cheever, of Jewett City, Conn.

Treasurer—Dea. I. Washburn, of Worcester.

Executive Committee—Hon. Elmer Brigham, of Westboro'; Rev. Samuel Hunt, of Franklin; Dea. I. Washburn, Charles Ballard, Esq., and Rev. Chester Field, of Worcester.

The President of the Convention being under the necessity of leaving at this stage of the proceedings, Rev. Mr. Goodell was called to the Chair. After solemn prayer by Rev. Mansfield French, of New York, Convention adjourned *sine die*.

A public anti-slavery meeting was held at Washburn Hall in the evening, at which Rev. HENRY T. CHEEVER presided, and prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Goodell. The proceedings of the Convention were read by Edward Gilbert, Esq., and Rev. George W. Basset, of Washington City, delivered a lecture from Prov. xxi: 13: "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not

be heard." The four millions of American slaves were declared to be pre-eminently, GOD'S POOR in America; and the duty of American Churches and Ministers in reference thereto was earnestly argued at great length.

A collection was taken at the close, to defray the expenses of the public meetings of the Convention; and it was announced that the claims of the Church Anti-Slavery Society would shortly be presented before the Worcester Churches at a united public meeting.

The following is from "The Worcester Transcript" of March 7th, correcting the misapprehensions of an editorial of March 5th, respecting the position and attitude of the Convention and the resulting Church Anti-Slavery Society:—

THE ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.

"The ground taken by the Convention must not be misinterpreted, for it is just the ground taken by the word of God against murder, drunkenness, idolatry, and all sin. On no other ground can slavery be successfully assaulted as sinful. The ground taken by the Convention is not that the holding of a man as a free person, for his own protection from slavery under slave laws, is sinful, for it is righteous; but that such holding is not slaveholding, and that if you call it slaveholding, and on that account say that slaveholding is not always sin, you shield both the slaveholder and his iniquity, and render it impossible to convict him of his guilt. The ground taken by the Convention is just this, namely: that the holding of a man as a slave, as property, and not as a free man—the holding of a man against his own consent, as a chattel, is slaveholding, and nothing else is; and that slaveholding being the holding of a man as property, and so depriving him of all his rights, is always, under all possible circumstances, sin. It is the very crime of man-stealing which God has defined to be either the stealing, the selling, or the holding of a man as a slave. This is always sin, and can be nothing but sin; and the Convention say so, and all good men, when the sophistry with which theological hair-splitters darken the subject is swept away, will rejoice that they have said so, and that at length the way is open for a union of all Christians on the basis of God's Word against the gigantic iniquity of slaveholding. This is the ground defended by Dr. Cheever.

"Now, so far from the churches being unprepared or unwilling to take this ground, which is precisely the ground taken by the Convention, it is the very ground on which they desire to be established, and will hail it with delight. They are kept back from it only by just such reasons and misconstructions as certain gentlemen, according to the account in your paper, endeavored to persuade the Convention to adopt. The churches are longing to see the ministry come out plainly with God's Word against the sin of slaveholding. The churches are not a parcel of Ephraims, concluding that gain is godliness, and that a profitable iniquity is not a sin in itself, not *malum per se*. How many persons are there in the churches that know what this phrase, *malum per se*, means? Yet, ministers are continually ringing its changes in their ears, till they think it is some profound, indisputable argument.

"But the churches no more believe that *slaveholding* is not, in itself, sinful,

than they believe that *murder* is not, in itself, sinful. They are as well prepared and as willing to say that slaveholding is inherently sinful, as they are to say that murder is inherently sinful. If a man should say that men sometimes kill one another by accident, and therefore that murder is not, under all circumstances, sinful in itself, and must not be called sinful, the churches would scout at such nonsense. If a man should say that the killing of another by accident is murder, and should contend that all killing, under all circumstances, is murder, and therefore that murder ought never to be said to be sinful in itself, you would regard him as a dishonest reasoner, if not as a rogue who wishes to contrive an apology for the murderer's guilt.

"Now the word *murder* might just as properly be applied to killing in self-defence, or to the killing of a murderer in protection of your wife and children from his brutal assault, or to the execution of a murderer by the sheriff, as the word *slaveholding* to the keeping of a man, a brother, under slave law, for the purpose of giving him his freedom. That is not slaveholding any more than the killing of a murderer, to keep your wife and children from being killed, is murder. Yet murder is under all possible circumstances a crime, and so is slaveholding under all possible circumstances a crime; because murder is the intentional killing of a man with malice against him, and slaveholding is the intentional holding of a man as property, against his own will, and without his contract or consent. Slaveholding is the intentional killing of his personal freedom, and the transmutation of him from a person into a thing. And this is always, under all circumstances, in itself, a crime. And the churches are not only prepared to sustain a convention that will take this high ground, but will rejoice with all their heart that it is taken, let hair-splitting and technical theologians say what they please. The churches will be glad to have us call sin. SIN."

"A MEMBER OF THE CONVENTION."